

A
LETTER

TO A

Member of Parliament,

On Behalf of the

ARMY

In General;

The Non-Commissioned Officer, Soldier, and
House-keeper in particular.

Honoured Sir,

THE little Relief the poor Soldiers have received after their long and tedious Attendance at the Parliament-House, hath obliged me to make a particular Inquiry into the Merit of the Cause, as well to satisfy my own Curiosity, as to justify their too much reason of Complaint; and I find that when the Army was in *Ireland*, they (who received most) received not exceeding 320 days Pay, from *September* the first, 1689. to the last of *December*, 1691. And altho' the Colonels, and most of the Captains, have received an Accompt of the *Irish* Arrears, stated from *September* the first, 1689. to the last of *March*, 1692. Yet the Officers (altho' directed by His Majesties particular Orders, bearing date the

10th of *February*, and 24th of *April* 1695. (in an Humble Address presented to His Majesty by the Parliament, intimating to Him, That the Soldiers, who had served in the Reducing of *Ireland*, had fully proved all Matters complained of, in their Petitions, and that there was Unreasonable Deductions made out of their Pay, and that they ought to be paid out of the Arrears due to the respective Regiments, petitioned against) Commanding them to Accompt with, and Pay their Men, on pain of Caltheering to such Officers as should refuse to obey His Majesties Orders) Refuseth to this Hour, to give the Soldiers any accompt of the Pay, due to them for their Service in *Ireland*; but Detains, from some, above 520 Days pay; and from others, about 600. And some Colonels refuse to give the Captains, or their Executors, any Accompt of the Pay due to themselves, or the Troops, and Companies, under their Command, in the Reducing of *Ireland*; altho' by Acts of Parliament, in the 3d and 4th Years of the Reign of King *William* and Queen *Mary*, which Act was Yearly renewed, till 1693. wherein the Subsistence (allowed for the Necessary Support of Bread and Drink, was settled, and to be Paid without any Deductions whatsoever) to every Non-Commissioned Officer and Soldier, (their Cloathes and Acoutrements being otherways provided at a Rack Price) yet they were no sooner Landed in *Flanders*, but out of every Twenty Shillings the Soldier received, he lost 2 s. 10 d. Likewise, it was the general Practice of the Officer to Deduct out of the remaining part of their Subsistence, for Tents, and Tent-Equipage, Baggage, Horses, Clerks Fees, Chirurgeons Fees, Contingencies, exacting 4 d. or 5 d. on every eight days Bread, above the Contract made, detaining several Weeks Bread, with several Months Pay, from Horse, Foot, and Dragoons; likewise, stopping 6 d. per day from the Light-Horse, and 3 d. per day from Dragoons, four Campaignes. By such Unjust Devices some Officers have ingross'd to themselves almost one half the Pay allowed by the Government, for the necessary support of Bread and Drink, to the Non-Commissioned Officers and Soldiers, that Served in *Flanders*, as well as some have detained the whole Pay, from Officers and Soldiers that Served in the reducing of *Ireland*: (the poor Soldiers) being forc'd to admit of these Deductions, under the Threats and Terrors of a *Court-Marshal*; most likewise were forc'd

to Sign Acquittances every Pay-day, before any Pay was tendred them; it being a Crime with the Officers, (deserving no less than Death, or Gantelet) for the Soldiers, to ask (either Money or Bread, altho without both, or to refuse to Sign Acquittances.) To prove the Truth of this Alligation, I could instance several Inhumane and Barbarous Cruelties, have been committed on the Soldiers, for asking for their Pay, or their Bread; (altho by way of Humble Petition,) which I shall at present forbear to mention: His Majesty (on the Disbanding and Reducing the Army) was pleased to direct his Royal Orders, to the Commanding Officers of each Regiment of Horse, Foot, and Dragoons, Commanding that the Quarters of each Troop or Company, should be fully satisfied; as also, that the Accompts between every Non-Commissioned Officer, and private Soldier, and their Officers, be made to the Day of their Disbanding, and that they be fully paid their Arrears, or other just Pretensions; what Compliance hath been shewn to His Majesties Orders, or to an Act of Parliament, made in 1699, for the Relief of the poor soldiers in general, their Complaints the last Sessions of Parliament, do sufficiently testifie, when the Committee thought it proper, that a Bill should be drawn, to erect a Court of Judicature, to compel the Officers to pay and clear of their Men; which Bill was read in the House once or twice, & then was laid by: And an other Act made, Constituting Commissioners to take, examine, and determine the Debts due to the Army; &c. but the word Soldier being forgot in that Act, the Officers only found Relief: It is well worth your Honours Consideration to observe, how careful our Predecessors have been, in providing for the Servant's Wages; when once Complaint is made, the Civil Magistrate in a Corporation, or the Justice of Peace in the Country commands the Payment; and it is Miserable, that the Soldiers (who hazard their Lives, spends their Youthful Days, and too often come home with fewer Limbs than they carried into the Field, besides the Hardships and Fatigues of War,) should have no Relief, but what common Law, or a long Suit in *Chancery* will allow, which they are not able to Prosecute; and if any were able, the Receipts and Acquittances which have been Extorted from them, before, at, and since the Disbanding and Reducing the Army, the Officers have to produce in Court against them; it being the general Practice of the

Officers, on the Disbanding and Reducing the Army, to refuse the Soldier's Discharges, until they first Sign'd Acquittances, knowing that unless they have honourable Discharges to produce to the Magistrate of the City, or Corporation, where they intend to settle themselves, conform to the tenor of an Act of Parliament, made for their Incouragement, they can have no benefit of the said Act, so being forc'd to procure their Discharge, by Signing an Acquittance; altho many never received one penny Pay for the time they served, nor His Majesties Bounty-Money when Discharged.

I am not able to set forth the Oppression and Miseries, the poor Soldiers labour under, through the Wicked, Malicious, and Unjust Proceedings of the Officers against them. As 1st. In Extorting Receipts from them. 2^{dly}, In detaining from them their Pay, (which I humbly conceive, their good and faithful Service may justly intitle them to.) 3^{dly}, In stripping some, and in denying, and turning others out of their Service; the Officers deeming such of the Disbanded, (as have either Petitioned the Parliament, for Justice against them, or have Arrested their Officer) to be Mutinous and Contentious; so by detraction, they are rendered incapable of serving His Majesty in a Military Function, (and ill Rewarded, for their good and faithful Service,) which hath oblig'd many to seek Service in *France*, others to Sell themselves for a term of Years, to the Plantations, others through extreme Want, have fallen to indirect Courses; and most or all, after having spent their all in giving Attendance at the Parliament-House, have contracted Debts with several of the Inhabitants, in and about the City of *London* and *Westminster*, and Liberties of the same. So unless they are enabled by this Honourable Parliament, to pay; by compelling the Officers to pay and clear them: Notwithstanding the Receipts which have been Extorted from them; several Inhabitants will sustain great Loss, if not many Ruined; some already being reduc'd to that Poverty, that they are not able to pay the Parish-Duties. All which being humbly submitted to your Honours Consideration, hoped as I can prove the Truth of these Alligations; that your Honour will appear, as you have always been ready to (assist the Poor and Needy, and willing to support the Opprest) by contributing your Indeavours that a due Method may be taken, that the poor Soldiers, (who by their Bravery abroad, have Eterniz'd the Honour of *England*;) may have some speedy relief, against their Officers, who injoy the Sweat of their Labours, (and Spurne at all Acts of Parliament, and the God Almighty prosper your Intents, and give a Happy Issue to your Indeavours: Since nothing is desired by the Soldiers but a just Accompt, nor any further design inme, but to assert the just Complaint of the Opprest.

F I N I S.

Your Humble and
Obedient Servant,
D. C.

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